

**5th Sunday of Lent (A)**  
**March 25, 2007**  
**By Father Charles Bowes**

**Ezekiel 37:12-14**  
**Psalm 130:1-8**  
**Romans 8:8-11**  
**John 11:1-45**

*We have listened to Jesus' voice. Now we journey on in hope to eternal life.*

Today the home stretch comes into clear view.

Walking faithfully in our midst, the catechumens of the Church have now reached their final Sunday of Scrutiny. Joy at their approaching baptism is already invading their bones. They are ready to journey to the table through the waters of baptism. And we make that journey with them through reconciliation - our communal service this Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.

When the Israelites had been scattered into various dark places by their alien conquerors, the prophet Ezekiel stirred up the embers of their hope. His vision of the valley of the dry bones that comes to life like a magnificent standing army was enough to convince even the diehard. Pessimists. As a child, I enjoyed reading and rereading that spine-tingling voice of the Lord announcing, "I will open your graves and have you rise from them." Who would not welcome the promise, "I will put my spirit in you that you may live"? The people listened and journeyed on in hope.

When Jesus heard that his beloved friend Lazarus was sick, he did not set out immediately because, through Lazarus, Jesus was about to reveal God's glory in a way that would foreshadow his own Easter victory. And because, through Lazarus, he was about to give his followers a sign that their own hope was not in vain. Jesus waits so that his disciples "may come to believe."

Jesus says to Martha, to our elect and to us, "I am the resurrection and the life...Do you believe this?" Together we assure him: "Yes, Lord, we do believe. You are the Lord of Life. Your Spirit breathes in us. Without you we are dry bones; we are entombed in winding sheets. Roll away the stone of our past sinfulness, O Lord. Speak our names, Lord Jesus. Command us to come forth!"

We have listened to his voice.  
Now we journey on in hope to  
eternal life.